

CA20NTR66
-76T51

Government
Publications



3 1761 120600218

Design for Development

Toronto-Centred Region
Program Statement

March 1976

The Honourable
W. Darcy McKeough
Treasurer of Ontario

A. Rendall Dick
Deputy Minister

Government
Publications

Toronto-Centred Region Program Statement

CA24NTR 66

-76T51

Ministry of Treasury, Economics
and Intergovernmental Affairs

Regional Planning Branch

TORONTO-CENTRED REGION
PROGRAM STATEMENT

March, 1976.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024 with funding from
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/31761120600218>

Table of Contents

Page No.

I.	Introduction	1
II.	Events Since 1971	3
III.	Regional Municipalities	4
IV.	Task Forces: COLUC, Simcoe, Northumberland	5
V.	Region-Wide Planning Issues	7
	A. Agricultural Land	7
	B. Recreation and Open Space	8
	1. Niagara Escarpment	9
	2. Parkway Belt System	9
	C. Regional Transportation	10
VI.	Area Planning Issues	12
	A. The Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth	12
	B. The Regional Municipality of Halton	12
	C. The Regional Municipality of Peel	13
	D. The Regional Municipality of York	13
	E. The Regional Municipality of Durham	14
	F. Simcoe County	16
	G. Northumberland County	17
VII.	Conclusion	18

Fig. 1. Toronto-Centred Region Program
Statement

2

Program Statement - Toronto-Centred Region

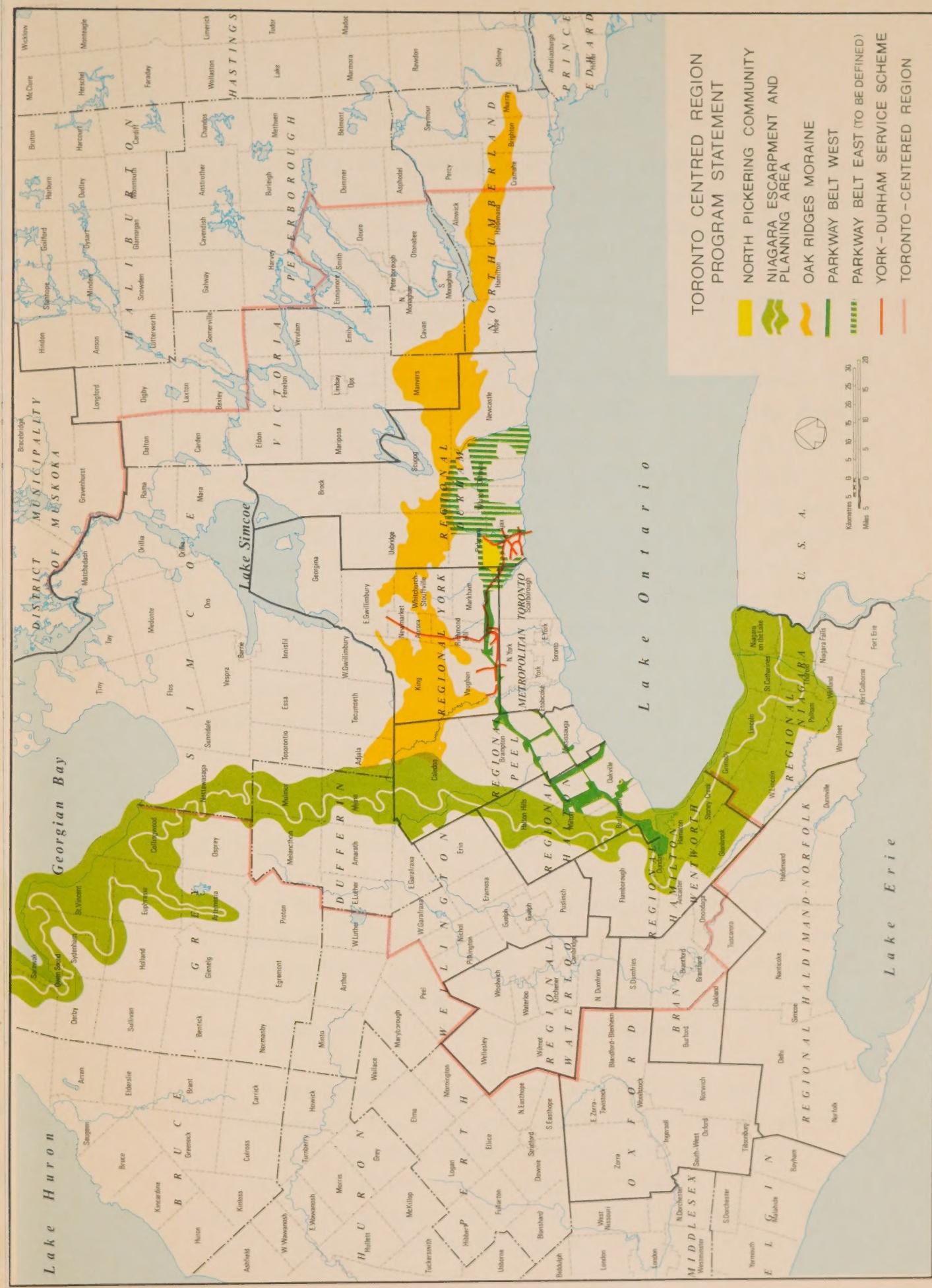
I. INTRODUCTION

In May 1970, Design for Development: Toronto-Centred Region was released by the provincial government (see Fig. 1). Since that time it has been elaborated upon by further policy statements--the Budget Speech of 1971, the Status Report of August 1971, and the Treasurer's statement in the Legislature on June 28, 1972, concerning the Parkway Belt.

The main principles of Design for Development: Toronto-Centred Region were that:

- Growth in the Toronto-Centred Region would take place primarily in a broad band along the shore of Lake Ontario between Hamilton and Oshawa in the form of distinct, identifiable communities.
- An extensive area to the north of this band would be maintained as a largely rural and recreational area.
- Beyond this second area (beyond easy commuting range of Toronto), growth would be encouraged in selected areas to ease the development pressure on the lakeshore area.

The Toronto-Centred Region concept is not a detailed plan. It is a general policy statement outlining a general pattern for urban development extending from Brantford to Georgian Bay, and eastward as far as Rice Lake. The concept accepts the fact that the Toronto-Centred Region will continue to grow, and may hold as many as eight million people by the end of this century. It is based on the principle that, if growth



of this scale is to benefit all the people in the region, it must be managed in such a way as to keep urban development attractive and efficient and to preserve valuable agriculture and recreational lands.

II. EVENTS SINCE 1971

The key objectives of the TCR policy remain valid today, and major steps have been taken during the last five years to put it into effect. The policy guides the municipalities in the region in preparing their official plans and the government in coordinating and directing the activities of its ministries and agencies in support of the development concept. As a result, development in the Toronto-Centred Region since 1971 has been generally consistent with the policy.

Nevertheless, after five years, the policy's objectives should be reviewed in the light of events since 1971. During this time, development pressures have continued to favour the area west of Metropolitan Toronto, while growth east of Metropolitan Toronto has not been so vigorous as foreseen. Growth pressures and servicing costs along the Yonge Street Corridor in the Regional Municipality of York indicate that the population allocations for this area must be reviewed. Major development projects in Simcoe and Northumberland Counties have awaited the preparation of development strategies for these counties by joint provincial-municipal task forces.

In considering these events of the past five years, the government has concluded that the basic TCR policy continues to be sound and workable, but that it should be adjusted to reflect the conditions of 1976. At this stage, the government re-affirms its commitment to the Toronto-Centred Region concept as the basis of its policy

for managing growth and development in this region, and will continue to move vigorously in putting the policy into effect.

III. REGIONAL MUNICIPALITIES

An important step towards managing growth in the Toronto-Centred Region effectively was the establishment of regional municipalities in areas where urban development pressures were most pronounced. The government's regional government program is motivated, in part, by its desire to encourage a more orderly approach to planning over broad geographical areas. The Acts which established regional municipalities enabled planning committees to be created as sub-committees of the regional councils. These planning committees, which took the place of the planning boards, thus combined planning with executive powers.

The Acts also require the regional councils to prepare regional official plans. Within the framework of provincial planning policy, these regional official plans are intended to guide the future development of the regional municipalities. Upon approval by the province, the plans will serve as a major component of the council's mechanism for guiding the growth management policy of its regional municipality, ensuring that development proceeds in an orderly, least-cost manner.

In interpreting the objectives and effect of provincial planning, close liaison between the province and the regional municipalities remains important. In general, the government expects regional municipalities to recognize provincial responsibility for guiding the broad outlines of provincial development and to prepare official plans which conform to provincial policies. As

a corollary, it assumes that planning decisions on matters which are of concern only at the regional or local level will be dealt with at these levels by the municipal councils.

Special assistance aimed at encouraging development in particular areas will continue to be provided where it is the policy of the government to foster major growth. Also, where services are provided by the government, directly or by agreement with the municipality, provincial planning policy will be taken into account in determining the appropriate nature, level, and location of such services. This in no way implies that assistance normally provided to municipalities under general programs will be affected.

IV. TASK FORCES: COLUC, SIMCOE, NORTHUMBERLAND

In the spirit of this broad concept for liaison and cooperation, an intergovernmental task force was established in 1974 to refine that part of the TCR concept which describes the urban portion of the Toronto-Centred Region lining the shore of Lake Ontario. The refinement was to be detailed enough to serve as an adequate basis for the regional municipalities to use in preparing their official plans. This task force (known as the COLUC Task Force, for Central Ontario Lakeshore Urban Complex) suggested the following criteria for managing growth in the lakeshore part of the Toronto-Centred Region:

- 1) Urban development would take the form of a series of distinct communities along the lakeshore, thus minimizing the cost of water supply and sewage treatment, as well as damage to the environment.

- 2) Such a linear development pattern would make it possible to build efficient, high-capacity transportation facilities: in particular, mass transit.

- 3) A second series (tier) of communities would parallel the first, or lakeshore tier, separated from it by a system of parkway belts. This arrangement would help to reduce congestion in the lakeshore tier of communities and provide for intervening open space, while transportation and other utilities would be located within the parkway belts.
- 4) The communities within the lakeshore urban complex would form a hierarchy of urban centres, providing local diversity of living and working opportunities.
- 5) Development to the east of Metropolitan Toronto would be encouraged, to reduce development pressures elsewhere in the region and to help expand social and economic development opportunities in the eastern flank of the Toronto-Centred Region.

The Task Force recommended that each of the major urban centres in the east-west structure be encouraged to grow to a large enough population to justify and sustain high levels of service and amenity. The task force also reiterated the vital importance of preserving the valuable agricultural and recreational resources of the Toronto-Centred Region.

In 1974, provincial-municipal planning task forces were also established to prepare development strategies for Simcoe and Northumberland Counties. Both these task forces have successfully completed their work, which involved extensive public participation, and have submitted their final reports. The government has reviewed these reports and accepted them in principle as a basis for proceeding with development in Simcoe and Northumberland. In view of prevailing economic conditions and the continued need to encourage growth in centres outside areas such

as Toronto, where urban development pressures and development costs are high, the government will give priority to those measures for carrying out the task force recommendations which are likely to be most effective in creating new employment. The recommendations of these task forces are dealt with in greater detail on pages 16 and 17 of this statement.

V. REGION-WIDE PLANNING ISSUES

As noted above, the government reaffirms its commitment to the Toronto-Centred Region concept as the basis for managing growth and development in that region. However, some adjustments must be made to the original concept to reflect the conditions of 1976. These can best be discussed in two ways. Some issues concern all or part of the Toronto-Centred Region and are reviewed below on a region-wide basis. Others refer only to a particular regional municipality or to a county and will be dealt with in Section VI, individually. The regional issues concern agriculture, recreation, and transportation.

A. Agricultural Land

In a policy statement, the Minister of Agriculture will discuss in detail the question of preserving agricultural land and of agriculture as a viable and vital industry. In the Toronto-Centred Region, this question is a particularly complex one. The pressures exerted by urban development extend well beyond the urban areas themselves. These pressures are demonstrated by the continued strong demand for rural land for various non-agricultural uses: for residences, hobby farms, and recreation.

During recent years, much valuable acreage has been taken out of production as a result of this demand. Further,

in some parts of the Toronto-Centred Region, about as many new lots are being created every year by severance as by registered plan of subdivision. This practice, in addition to causing increased fragmentation of land holdings throughout rural areas, is now straining the resources of many rural municipalities, which must provide these scattered residential lots with services.

Putting into effect the government's policy of preserving Ontario's food lands for agriculture will require close cooperation between the province and the municipalities in the Toronto-Centred Region. This cooperation should lead to a general development pattern in which urban growth takes place in areas designated for this use in provincial policy and specified in municipal official plans. The development objectives should be that new urban development take place on lower quality lands--not the choicest farmland; that development pressures on rural municipalities be reduced; and that less good farmland be turned into residential lots through severance and rural estate subdivision.

Since the population in the province is increasing more slowly now than it was even a few years ago, the province plans to keep some of the proposed second-tier communities in agricultural production as long as possible. Indeed, if the rate of population increase continues to drop, it may not be necessary to develop some of these communities at all, even in the long run.

B. Recreation and Open Space

Within the Toronto-Centred Region are a number of noteworthy recreation areas, of regional and even provincial and national significance. These unique and valuable resources are among the assets of the region, and it is the government's views that the more significant of them

should be preserved for future generations. Several years ago, for instance, the government took steps to preserve the Niagara Escarpment, an important part of which is located within the Toronto-Centred Region. It has also preserved many smaller areas with unique characteristics as provincial parks or conservation areas.

In cooperation with the municipalities in the region, the government will continue to pursue this dual policy of keeping enough good recreational land available for the region's growing population, and of preserving areas with unique natural attributes. I would like to describe briefly two of the projects through which the government is carrying out this policy.

1. Niagara Escarpment

Work on a master plan for the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area is progressing satisfactorily. This plan is being prepared with the active cooperation of the municipalities concerned and involves extensive consultation with the public. The government expects that the master plan will be completed in the course of 1977.

2. Parkway Belt System

The Parkway Belt System has been an important component of the Toronto-Centred Region concept from the start. It is intended to perform a number of functions. Primarily, the system places open space between built-up areas. In addition, in some places it will serve as a corridor for transportation and communication facilities, including major hydro transmission lines. The system as a whole, with municipal parks and conservation areas, will link important recreational facilities with each other and with nearby communities. Finally, the Parkway Belt System will preserve accessible land for future activities.

Work on the Parkway Belt West is now well advanced. With the cooperation of two advisory committees--a municipal advisory committee, and an Interest Groups and Residents Advisory Committee--an interim draft plan has been prepared and was released in January 1976. Public hearings on the Parkway Belt West Draft Plan are expected to start in May 1976.

The Parkway Belt East portion of the system is now in its preliminary design stages. The government proposes to join with the municipalities concerned in preparing a plan for this part of the system.

C. Regional Transportation

The development of the transportation system serving the Toronto-Centred Region is considered an important factor to the region's strong growth. The road network has undergone major development since the mid-fifties, and almost the entire region is now served by an excellent network of highways. In May 1967, the government established GO Transit in response to the growing need for transit services in the region, in particular in the highly urbanized areas adjacent to Lake Ontario.

As was the case when the road network was expanded, GO Transit responded to the demand for its services in the region. In a few years it has become a major force in providing transit services. Although demand will continue to be a major factor in expanding regional transportation facilities, other factors will become increasingly important. An important element in provincial planning policy is the encouragement of strong regional centres east and west of Metropolitan Toronto. These centres, along with others of varying scale throughout

the lakeshore urban zone of the Toronto-Centred Region, are expected to provide the people living in or near them with a variety of jobs and services. These people will accordingly come to depend less upon Toronto for jobs and services, lessening the pressure on Toronto to provide them for the entire region. This, in turn, will reduce the need for commuting to Toronto and will relieve some of the development pressures in the downtown area of the region's central city.

Decentralizing development in this way imposes particular requirements on the design and performance of the region's transportation system. Frequent contacts will be required during working hours between businesses located in the sub-centres and those in the central city. These contacts require a transportation system providing high-speed, efficient service. Such a service must be distinguished from the normal commuter service, and may be provided most effectively by rail.

A most important consideration in developing the regional transportation system further is the high cost involved. It is essential that future capital investments create a comprehensive transportation plan that supports provincial preferences and emerging municipal planning policies. It is the government's position that increasing consultation will be required between the province and the municipalities in refining the over-all transportation strategy for the region and in putting this strategy into effect.

Of increasing concern to the government is the energy consumed by alternative forms of transportation, and the growing need to consider this factor in planning new facilities. The government considers the development of

its regional transit service (GO Transit) as most important in this regard. Thus, the capacity of the lakeshore service is already being increased significantly through the use of double-deck coaches, and it will probably be possible to start a rail service between Richmond Hill and Toronto in the near future. In addition, extension of GO rail service to Streetsville is in the advanced planning stages, and the network of GO buslines also continues to grow.

VI. Area Planning Issues

A. The Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth

The Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth, generally speaking, represents the western terminal of the Toronto-Centred Region. It is a strong regional centre, whose influence extends well beyond the boundaries of the Toronto-Centred Region. The government's policy is to encourage the regional municipality to develop as a regional centre in its own right, subject to provincial policies relating to preserving prime agricultural land and recreational resources.

B. The Regional Municipality of Halton

Recent population forecasts indicate that the Regional Municipality of Halton will not grow as much as was expected when the Toronto-Centred Region concept was released. The second-tier municipalities proposed for Halton in the concept will therefore not be needed as soon as expected, and some of them may not be needed at all. The second-tier communities should not be eliminated, however, if their loss would lead to major enlargement

and increased population allocations in the lakeshore communities or in urban areas in other parts of the regional municipality.

C. The Regional Municipality of Peel

The Regional Municipality of Peel is one of Canada's fastest growing urban areas. The City of Mississauga is developing as a strong regional centre west of Metropolitan Toronto, with the prospect of providing the residents of the area it serves with a wide variety of jobs and high-level services. It is the government's position to encourage this development within the limits set by provincial policies relating to the preservation of prime agricultural land, recreational land, and other open space resources. Urban development elsewhere in the regional municipality continues to be influenced by the provincial policies outlined in the Toronto-Centred Region concept.

D. The Regional Municipality of York

Pressures for growth in the Regional Municipality of York have been above those foreseen in the Toronto-Centred Region concept. York's population was expected to reach approximately 350,000 by the end of this century, and the regional municipality was expected to maintain its largely agricultural character.

After reviewing the development pressures with York and studying York's ability to accommodate a larger population while still retaining its agricultural character, the government agreed to raise the regional municipality's population allocation to

approximately 550,000. This population is not expected to be reached until well into the next century.

The York-Durham Servicing Scheme will serve about 450,000 of the total 550,000 people, as well as about 8,400 industrial acres. Much of this acreage will be for low-intensity industrial uses.

This population will be distributed among specific communities according to the official plan York is now preparing, within the limits set by provincial policies on the preservation of prime agricultural land, recreational land, and other open space resources. The proposed highways Nos. 404 and 407, when developed, will be designed to satisfy broad regional transportation requirements only: that is, they will be designed for through traffic, with a minimum number of interchanges.

E. The Regional Municipality of Durham

Among the main principles of the Toronto-Centred Region concept is encouragement of development to the east of Metropolitan Toronto. Eastward growth is needed to reduce development pressures elsewhere in the region and to increase the opportunities for social and economic development in the eastern flank of the region. Although the economy of the Regional Municipality of Durham has expanded strongly during the last few decades, during the five years that the TCR concept has served as the basis for government planning policy, Durham's economic growth has fallen somewhat short of the government's goals. It is the government's position that growth in

employment opportunities should keep pace with residential growth, and that Durham's relative dependence on a small number of major industries should be reduced by broadening the economic base.

The government intends to begin discussions with the regional municipality on various steps which both levels of government could take to speed up the creation of new jobs in the region. Many economic activities are seen as having excellent potential in Durham. In helping Durham realize this economic potential, the government will discuss with the regional municipality the establishment and joint funding of an industrial promotion board. This board would have a budget for research and promotion, and would have major responsibilities for attracting new manufacturing and service industries to Durham.

The government also intends to discuss with the regional municipality proposals for sharing the cost of servicing new industrial land. Current estimates indicate that approximately 2,000 additional serviced industrial acres will be required by 1986. The location of these industrial areas will be chosen in conjunction with the regional municipality, within the context of the regional official plan. Similar cost-sharing arrangements for servicing new land for housing will be considered at a later stage.

Strengthening and stimulating economic development in Durham will also require reducing Durham's dependence on Toronto for cultural and recreational activities. The government intends to discuss with the regional municipality how best to reduce this dependence and what facilities or services Durham may need to satisfy its people's requirements in these areas.

Total growth expectations for the regional municipality during the next few decades suggest that some of the second-tier communities proposed for Durham in the Toronto-Centred Region concept may not be needed for some time to come. The second-tier communities should not be eliminated, however, if their loss would lead to major enlargement and increased population allocations in the lakeshore communities or in urban areas in other parts of the regional municipality--or, indeed, if eliminating these communities would alter substantially the broad concept for development outlined in the Toronto-Centred Region concept. Within the context of the TCR concept, the government is proceeding with the development of the new community of North Pickering.

F. Simcoe County

The report of the joint provincial-municipal task force on the planning and development of the Simcoe-Georgian area has recently been submitted to the government. The task force proposed strong growth for Simcoe County's four major urban centres: Barrie, Orillia, Midland, and Collingwood. Other parts of the county would grow much less; any growth there would result from the creation of new employment and would conform to the government's policies for preserving prime agricultural lands and recreational resources. The task force expects that the total population of the county will grow to approximately 500,000 early in the next century from its current population of approximately 200,000.

The government has reviewed the report of the task force and accepts it in principle. Priorities for development are now being reviewed and planning will

begin as soon as possible, so that the necessary land for industrial, commercial, and residential purposes can be serviced and development can start. At the same time, steps will be taken to begin attracting the various types of economic activity required. It should be emphasized that any development assistance will not affect normal government programs. These will continue to be available to all communities in the county.

The government welcomes and supports the task force's recommendations to preserve the county's prime agricultural and recreational resources. It is the government's position that, except in the Barrie and Orillia areas, significant urban development on the Lake Simcoe-Lake Couchiching shoreline, such as that proposed at Alcona Beach, should not proceed.

G. Northumberland County

The joint provincial-municipal task force on the planning and development of Northumberland County has also submitted its report to the government recently. The task force proposes a development strategy for the county which would double its population by the end of the century to approximately 125,000. It recommends that all new population growth be related to the creation of new jobs--the county should not grow by becoming a dormitory suburb--and that particular attention be paid to preserving the county's prime agricultural and recreational resources.

The task force also recommends that about half of the new urban population be accommodated in the county's major urban centres--Port Hope, Cobourg,

Brighton, and Campbellford--and that significant new urban growth be encouraged in the area of the Village of Colborne.

The government has reviewed the report of the task force, accepts it in principle, and is now reviewing priorities for development. As an initial step, the government will extend the Ontario Business Incentives Program and the new industrial parks program to apply to Northumberland County. The government will give priority to helping the Port Hope and Cobourg areas develop to the levels recommended by the task force by helping them extend their municipal services to industrial and residential land. Assistance for expanding similar services in the Brighton and Campbellford areas will have a somewhat lower priority. Early attention will also be given to the county's problem in managing solid wastes.

The government will also help Northumberland County to establish a county-wide planning agency and industrial promotion team. When these units exist, the government proposes to enter into detailed discussions with the county on the developments proposed by the task force near the Village of Colborne.

VII. CONCLUSION

The foregoing demonstrates the government's resolve to proceed purposefully to carry out its planning policy for the Toronto-Centred Region. However, no matter how carefully forecasts are prepared, plans and policies must be reviewed regularly in the light of changing conditions. This continual review is essential in keeping them up to date, relevant, and capable of taking full advantage of new opportunities.

The government is confident about the future of the Toronto-Centred Region: it will continue to grow dynamically. Because the region's valuable natural resources must be used with increasing care, this growth will present a continued management challenge to all levels of government throughout the region, including those parts not reviewed specifically in this statement: the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, the Brantford area, and the Peterborough-Lindsay area, for instance.

In the context of its province-wide planning policies, the government will be continuing its planning program covering the entire Central Ontario Planning Region, in consultation with all regions and municipalities concerned.

